



**Office of the Attorney General
Paul G. Summers**

NEWS RELEASE

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**WATER SUPERVISOR PLEADS GUILTY TO FORGERY,
SURRENDERS WATER OPERATOR LICENSE**

A former supervisor of a Marion County water treatment facility has pleaded guilty to forging documents and fabricating water testing in that area, Tennessee Attorney General Paul G. Summers announced today.

Members of the Attorney General's Office worked with District Attorney J. Michael Taylor in the case against Jack McGowan, former superintendent of the Whitwell Water System, in Jasper. McGowan admitted to fabricating reports filed with the Division of Water Supply in the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC). McGowan, who entered his guilty plea as part of a plea agreement with the State, also agreed to surrender his water operator license, pay a \$6,100 fine to TDEC, and be placed on two years of supervised probation.

"We are satisfied with this agreement," Attorney General Summers said. "We hope this will send a message to others who contemplate falsifying documents about the water Tennesseans drink."

The case began in 2001 when an anonymous informant reported to TDEC's Division of Water Supply that there were discrepancies in McGowan's reports of water samples he claimed to have taken. As operator of the plant, McGowan was responsible for managing an ongoing program for detection and elimination of microbiological hazards to ensure safe public drinking water for approximately 4,272 people. McGowan admitted in court he never took the samples he claimed and fabricated results and forged the signatures of customers.

TDEC Commission Betsy Child said, "Tennesseans depend upon the good faith of local water agencies truthfully reporting regular water tests. The Tennessee Drinking Water Act requires regular testing of the drinking water supply to assure citizens it is safe to drink."

TDEC Deputy Commissioner Karen Stachowski added, "Regular testing of our drinking water supplies is critical to the protection of human health and the environment. The vast majority of water system operators in Tennessee take that responsibility very seriously, just as we do at TDEC. We have systems in place to catch the few that don't, and the system worked."